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# GENERAL DEBATE: EXAMINATION OF THE WORLD SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO DRUG ABUSE, INCLUDING ILLICIT DEMAND, ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND ILLICIT SUPPLY

## Reports of subsidiary bodies**

**Summary**

The present report, excerpted from reports of subsidiary bodies of the Commission, reflects the trends in illicit drug traffic in the regions of Africa and Asia and the Pacific during 1993. It also reflects trends in Europe, North America, and South America which have an impact on drug traffic in the first two regions. The dominant trend was increased frequency and quantity of seizures of illicit drugs, together with the arrest and prosecution of a large number of persons of different nationalities for drug-related offences. Because of their geographical position in relation to producer and consumer countries, several States in Africa and in Asia and the Pacific were also vulnerable to transit traffic, which had aggravated the drug abuse problem in many countries, particularly as concerns heroin. The region of Asia and the Pacific remained a major producer and market for opiates, particularly heroin, for cannabis and for psychotropic substances, particularly amphetamines and methamphetamines. Trafficking routes and the modus operandi of drug traffickers were constantly changing as traffickers adjusted to drug law enforcement initiatives. Several countries were becoming increasingly vulnerable to illicit traffic by sea. The report also reflects measures taken by States at the national, bilateral or regional levels to combat illicit drug traffic.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The present document comprises two chapters. Chapter I covers matters which may require action by the Commission arising from a regional meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA). Chapter II reproduces that chapter of each report of each meeting on the current trends in the illicit drug traffic in the region.

2. Two subsidiary bodies of the Commission met during 1993: HONLEA, Africa, held its sixth meeting at Abidjan from 24 to 28 May 1993 and HONLEA, Asia and the Pacific, held it eighteenth meeting at Seoul from 13 to 17 September 1993. The Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East will hold its thirtieth session at Damascus from 21-25 February 1994 and the relevant parts of its report will be before the Commission in document E/CN.7/1994/2/Add.1.

3. In view of the fact that the Sixth Meeting of HONLEA, Latin America and the Caribbean, will be convened only after the Commission session and that HONLEA, Europe, will meet only in 1995, a report on trends in illicit traffic in those two regions, based on an analysis of information available to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), will be before the Commission in a separate document.

4. In an attempt to comply better with a series of General Assembly resolutions concerning limitation of documentation, beginning with the 1992 session of the Commission, reports of the above meetings were issued in the working language(s) of the respective subsidiary organs as conference room papers. Thus the participating States of the region have available in the working languages a record of the meeting and of all the recommendations directed at Governments of the region. The Commission, on the other hand, has before it in all official languages, an expose of those matters which may require action on its part or which should officially be brought to its attention as well as a summary of the illicit traffic situation in each region. The three reports of the subsidiary bodies will be before the Commission in documents E/CN.7/1994/CRP.3-5.

# I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

## A. Sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa

5. The Sixth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Africa, adopted the recommendations emanating from the various working groups that it had established. The recommendations are contained in paragraphs 21, 25, 27, 30, 33 and 36 of chapter III of the report of the Meeting (E/CN.7/1994/CRP.3). The recommendations, addressed mainly to Governments of the region, are brought to the attention of the Commission for information. Direct reference to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) is made in paragraph 25 (i).

## B. Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

6. The Eighteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, adopted the recommendations emanating from the various working groups that it had established. The recommendations are contained in paragraphs 63, 66, 69 and 72 of chapter IV of the report of the Meeting (E/CN.7/1994/CRP.4). The recommendations, addressed mainly to Governments of the region, are brought to the attention of the Commission for information. Recommendations addressed directly to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) are contained in paragraphs 63(a), (b), (c) and (e), 66(d), (g) and (i), and 72(f). In addition, paragraph 63(g), called for the convening of a world conference on heroin, under the auspices of UNDCP, to intensify efforts in and increase the commitment of Governments to the combat against illicit production and traffic.

### (i) Venues of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Meetings of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific

7. The attention of the Commission is drawn to the offer by the Government of New Zealand to host the Nineteenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Asia and the Pacific, at Wellington in 1994 and the offer of the Government of Indonesia to host the meeting in 1995.

## II. CURRENT SITUATION AND RECENT TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC

### A. Africa

8. The reports on the illicit drug traffic situation prevailing in the countries of the region pointed to an increase in seizures of illicit drugs and the arrest and prosecution of a large number of persons for drug-related offences. Participants expressed great concern at the increased illicit traffic in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the African region. In this connection reference was made to the increased number of Africans arrested in European countries for drug trafficking offences. Because of their geographical position in relation to producer and consumer countries, most African countries were vulnerable to transit traffic in illicit drugs particularly heroin from south-east and south-west Asia moving through Africa to Europe and cocaine moving through western and northern Africa to Europe.

9. Several speakers commended UNDCP for its programme of work in support of the activities of Governments in Africa in combating illicit drug traffic and abuse. Particular mention was made of its strategy based on a subregional approach.

Heroin

10. Several countries in the region continued to be adversely affected by illicit transit traffic in heroin from south-east and south-west Asia. It was reported that African traffickers obtained heroin from Thailand, Hong Kong and Pakistan for distribution in Europe after travelling through eastern African States to western Africa, using complex and deceptive flight routing. The airports at Addis Ababa, Cairo and Nairobi were the main entry points in the African region; Abidjan, Banjul, Cotonu, Dakar, Kinshasa and Lome were becoming important exit points. Illicit traffic in heroin appeared to be gradually spreading from western to central, eastern and southern Africa as traffickers were seeking new markets and routes. According to the CCC Central Information System, over 400 heroin seizures made worldwide in 1992 had involved trafficking organizations based in western Africa and had resulted in the seizure of over 1,000 kg of heroin, of which 185 kg had been seized in Nigeria, over 200 kg had been seized in Thailand, 135 kg had been seized in the United Arab Emirates and over 200 kg had been seized in the United States of America; a total of 150 kg had been seized in European countries.

Cannabis

11. Cannabis continued to be one of the most abused drugs in Africa. Increased illicit production of and trafficking in cannabis, often in bulk quantities, were reported by several speakers. Large-scale cannabis production and trafficking were reported along the border areas of Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. Morocco was a major source of cannabis resin, much of which was destined for western Europe; a large share of the cannabis resin was being moved through Algeria. The Meeting was informed of the stringent measures taken by the Government of Morocco to combat illicit drug trafficking, especially the illicit cultivation of and traffic in cannabis and its derivatives. Reference was made of a recent trend regarding illicit traffic in cannabis resin from Pakistan to countries in eastern Africa for redistribution to Europe. Over 7 tonnes of cannabis resin from Pakistan had been seized in Uganda and over 5 tonnes had been seized in the United Republic of Tanzania in 1992. Cannabis herb of African origin had been seized in several European countries since 1992.

12. Cannabis being transported from or through Africa was destined mainly for Europe, particularly Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Such trafficking was becoming more organized and was being controlled at all stages by structured drug trafficking networks comprising persons from several African countries operating in collusion with European organized criminal syndicates. Illicit production of cannabis from sub-Saharan Africa was expected to increase, thereby compensating for a decrease in the availability of cannabis and cannabis resin from Morocco resulting from stringent measures taken in that country. That development could lead to increased involvement of European organized criminal networks. Traffickers from Europe, mainly from the Netherlands, were involved in bulk trafficking in cannabis leaves and resin to western Europe, particularly from Morocco. Some 7 tonnes of cannabis had been seized moving through Algeria and several Dutch nationals had been arrested for trafficking in cannabis and its derivatives in 1992.

Cocaine

13. Countries in western and northern Africa, particularly Ghana, Nigeria and Morocco, were being used as transit States for the illicit traffic in cocaine from South America to Europe. Morocco, because of its geographical proximity to Spain, was particularly affected by the transit traffic in cocaine, which involved European and South American criminal groups. Individual

air couriers played an important role in transporting cocaine from South American countries to Accra and Lagos for distribution to Europe. Cape Verde and cities such as Abidjan, Dakar and Libreville were secondary targets of such traffic. Illicit traffic in cocaine was also spreading to eastern and southern Africa; seizures had been made in South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Larger consignments of cocaine were being shipped in commercial cargo or in personal luggage. The Meeting was informed that western African drug traffickers had been involved in over 200 cocaine seizures that had been reported to CCC in 1992. Those seizures had totalled over 500 kg, of which 400 kg had been seized in Nigeria, 17 kg had been seized in countries in southern Africa and 112 kg had been seized in countries in Europe.

14. In Ghana, 23 kg of cocaine had been seized since 1992. In addition to the abuse resulting from transit traffic in cocaine in Ghana, that country was facing an increase in illicit manufacture and abuse in crack. Several consignments of sodium bicarbonate and paraphernalia used in the illicit manufacture of crack had been seized in Ghana.

Psychotropic Substances

15. Several speakers reported on the increased abuse of and traffic in psychotropic substances in their countries. Nigeria was often used as a distribution centre and as a source of psychotropic substances for several other countries in western Africa. Increased traffic was reported between Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Togo. Reference was made to meetings organized by UNDCP and by ICPO/Interpol to address the issue of illicit traffic in methaqualone and related issues. The observer for CCC reported that the law enforcement authorities in India had intercepted over 6/tonnes of methaqualone in consignments destined for eastern and southern Africa. Those seizures reflected successful interdiction efforts in several African countries, particularly Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia. The need for African countries to adopt measures to monitor precursors frequently used in the manufacture of illicit drugs was emphasized following the seizure of substances and equipment used for the illicit manufacture of methaqualone in eastern Africa.

16. Some speakers drew attention to the problems encountered as a result of the diversion of large quantities of psychotropic substances from the licit market, often by forging import permits. Such diversion had considerably increased the availability of psychotropic substances on the illicit market. A

related problem faced by several African States was the great variety of psychotropic substances sold as medicine by vendors without prescription or medical supervision.

Modus operandi and countermeasures

17. Most speakers commented on the trafficking routes and modus operandi adopted by drug traffickers. Some heroin traffickers had reduced their dependence on air couriers by relying more on other means of trafficking, such as air freight. In some countries, large quantities of illicit drugs were being smuggled by air and sea, concealed in commercial consignments. Several speakers stated that increased efforts should be made to deter illicit drug trafficking involving small, unregistered vessels along the coasts of western African countries. Such illicit drug consignments were often transshipped to even smaller boats.

18. There was a growing preference for heroin traffickers to use professional couriers as evidenced by the seizure of larger quantities of drugs with fewer people involved. The use of teams of couriers carrying small amounts had continued. It was noted that, as a result of the monitoring of Nigerian couriers at entry and exit points in several transit States, Nigerian traffickers had recruited as couriers other Africans, Europeans and North Americans, particularly young women. They were constantly changing their itineraries, using combinations involving new air routes and taking advantage of weak and inadequate border controls.

19. Internal body concealment and false luggage compartments and linings continued to be among the most frequently used means of trafficking in illicit drugs, particularly heroin and cocaine. Airline passengers from different African countries, using body or luggage concealment, continued to be important couriers, particularly for heroin from south-east and south-west Asia. Several speakers drew attention to the use of falsified passports and travel documents by couriers, particularly by couriers from countries in western Africa.

20. Several speakers highlighted the factors that made their countries vulnerable to illicit traffic. They referred to the negative effects of drug abuse and illicit traffic on the economies of their countries. In their opinion, drug traffickers were using African countries as transit points because of the weak detection capabilities, the lack of trained personnel, and the particularly difficult economic conditions in those countries, not to mention the large number of displaced persons as a result of civil war in several countries.

21. Several speakers informed the Meeting of measures taken by their Governments to cope with the deteriorating situation regarding illicit traffic in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Specialized drug law enforcement and other units had been created in some countries to deal with drug trafficking offences. Centralized, interministerial, coordinating bodies, comprised of personnel from different agencies, had been established in some countries. Some speakers referred to the adoption of new laws and regulations or to the amendment of existing laws to provide for more stringent penalties for drug trafficking offences, particularly money-laundering offences. Some speakers referred to measures taken in the field of demand reduction to complement drug law enforcement action, particularly media campaigns cautioning vulnerable groups, such as youth, about the serious consequences of drug abuse.

22. Many speakers referred to the urgent need for African States to develop an active intelligence capability and the means to exchange operational information directly between themselves. That was considered to be an essential requirement in combating illicit drug traffic and a prerequisite for extending the thrust of drug law enforcement activities beyond the arrest of couriers to the identification and prosecution of the organizers of drug trafficking operations. Some speakers stressed the need for their authorities to be informed of the arrest of their nationals for drug trafficking offences, in order to enable them to investigate such drug trafficking offences in their own country and to develop courier profiles.

23. Several speakers emphasized the paramount importance of regional and subregional cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking. They referred to the positive results that their Governments had achieved by having entered into bilateral agreements or other forms of cooperation. Reference was also made to the need to establish a mechanism in each subregion to ensure the coordination of policies and activities against illicit drug traffic. Some speakers referred to the important role of HONLEA meetings in strengthening cooperation between drug law enforcement agencies in combating illicit drug traffic and in adopting effective countermeasures at the regional level.

## B. Asia and the Pacific

24. Illicit opium cultivation, traffic and abuse, particularly of heroin and psychotropic substances, remained a grave threat to social order, national security and economic development in several countries of the region. The region remained a major producer and market for opiates, particularly heroin, for cannabis and for psychotropic substances, particularly amphetamines and methamphetamine. Some representatives reported that their countries were particularly vulnerable to transit traffic in illicit drugs, particularly heroin, because of their geographical position in relation to producer and consumer countries. The spillover of transit traffic, particularly in heroin, had aggravated the drug abuse problem in several countries. Several representatives reported significant increases in the frequency and quantity of drugs seized, the emergence of new trafficking routes in the region, and the arrest and prosecution of a large number of persons of different nationalities for drug-related offences. Several countries in the region were increasingly confronted with the new phenomenon of traffic in and abuse of cocaine.

### Illicit opium production and traffic in heroin

25. The world's principal opium-poppy-growing areas located in South-East Asia (the Golden Triangle) and South-West Asia (the Golden Crescent) accounted for the bulk of world production of opium and heroin. Illicit traffic in opium and heroin from the region continued to have an adverse impact on States within and outside the region.

26. Opium production in the main South-East Asian producing countries of Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand had steadily increased in 1991, 1992 and 1993, as confirmed by the volume and frequency of seizures and recent production estimates. Major seizures in China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Thailand during 1992 and 1993 indicated that trafficking in opium increased with the level of production. Some 1,915/kilograms of opium were seized in China and 1,522 kilograms in India during the first half of 1993. Several new trends were emerging. During 1992 and the first six months of 1993, nationals of the Islamic Republic of Iran operating as couriers were active in the illicit traffic of opium to Japan. The Republic of Korea was facing an unprecedented threat from the illicit traffic in opium from China, organized mainly by Koreans of Chinese descent.

27. Several representatives informed the Meeting of measures taken and difficulties encountered by their Governments in combating illicit poppy cultivation, illicit processing of opium, trafficking and abuse of opium and heroin.

28. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, production of opium and trafficking were reported to be organized on a small scale with farmers selling a few kilograms of raw opium at a time to traffickers. Processing of opium into heroin took place in remote areas of the north-west with the involvement of criminal elements from neighbouring countries. Processing occurred in refineries which, after a short period of operation, were dismantled and moved to other locations in order to avoid detection. It was reported that the price of opium in many places in the Lao People's Democratic Republic had dropped by 50 per cent to 50 United States dollars (US$) per kilogram in 1992. This decrease was said to have resulted from increased drug law enforcement activities which made it more difficult for farmers to find buyers.

29. One representative indicated that the rural development and opium reduction programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, initiated in 1989 with the financial and technical assistance of UNDCP and the Government of the United States, had resulted in a 39 per cent reduction of total illicit opium poppy cultivation. The total area under illicit cultivation was estimated at 19,190 hectares, with an estimated total production in 1992 of 125 to 130/tonnes of raw opium, and an estimated 42,000 opium abusers. Currently there was no specific drug control legislation, and the penal code of the Lao People's Democratic Republic did not cover all drug-trafficking offences.

30. Viet Nam was confronted with increased illicit poppy cultivation in traditional opium-growing areas in some northern highland provinces. During the first six months of 1993 the Vietnamese authorities seized 762 kilograms of opium compared with 1,115 kilograms in 1992. Viet Nam was increasingly being used for the transit of an estimated 10 tonnes of opiates which entered the country by road and air routes from neighbouring countries. The problems facing the Government were compounded by the limited control exercised by the authorities over the licit import, storage and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, by inadequate coordination between national drug law enforcement agencies and by outdated legislation.

31. It was estimated that 65,568 acres of opium poppy were cultivated in Myanmar during the 1992 season in the hill regions in the eastern border areas close to China, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand. Some 8,946 acres were eradicated and 2,193 kilograms of opium were seized in 1992 and 1,526 kilograms in the first six months of 1993. Integrated rural development pilot programmes focusing on crop substitution, with the financial and technical support of UNDCP, were initiated in 1992.

32. An estimated 2,700 hectares of opium poppy were cultivated in northern Thailand during 1992/93, and the Thai authorities were able to eradicate 1,707/hectares. It was claimed that only some 998 hectares of opium poppy, yielding about 16 tonnes of opium, remained in 1993.

33. The New Zealand authorities were concerned about the sharp increase in the seizures of opium poppies; a record 179,800 poppies were seized in the 1992/93 period.

34. The availability of heroin had increased worldwide, with wholesale prices decreasing in Europe and the Asia and the Pacific region. South-West Asia was the main source of heroin found on the Western European market. While the Balkan route continued to be the predominant trafficking route for heroin entering Western Europe, new trafficking routes to that region had emerged as a result of political turmoil in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the lack of effective customs controls in a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

35. South-East Asia was the main source of heroin seized in Australia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Some 1,898 kilograms of heroin were reported seized in the first six months of 1993 in China.

36. Trafficking and abuse of heroin continued to escalate in the United States. The bulk of the heroin seized was of South-East Asian origin. Mexico, South America and South-West Asia were other important sources of supply. Major South-East Asian heroin-trafficking organizations oversee the smuggling of South-East Asian heroin into the United States. South-East Asian nationals were often used to transport heroin and accounted for the largest bulk shipments to the United States. West African trafficking organizations, primarily controlled by Nigerians, were active in the illicit traffic of heroin, using couriers of

various nationalities aboard commercial airliners. Traffic in South-West Asian heroin to the United States was controlled by a variety of criminal groups organized by traffickers from Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon and Pakistan.

37. In Malaysia, No. 3 heroin seized in the country was destined for the domestic market, while No. 4 heroin was for further distribution to other markets, mainly Australia and Europe. The Malaysian authorities reported significant increases in seizures of raw opium (148.75 kilograms) and heroin (149.31 kilograms) during the first half of 1993. A recent development was the increasing use of Malaysia during 1992 and 1993 as a transit point for heroin destined for Australia. Several Malaysian couriers had been apprehended by the Australian and Japanese authorities.

38. The illicit heroin traffic in the Republic of Korea was changing radically, with reports of an unprecedented number of heroin abuse cases being detected in 1992 and 1993. Previously used as a transit route for South-East Asian heroin, the Republic of Korea was being increasingly targeted as a market.

39. Heroin was smuggled into Thailand from 25 clandestine refineries belonging to minority groups located along the Thai and Myanmar borders. Of the estimated 10 tonnes of heroin produced annually in the border area of Thailand, the Thai authorities usually have been able to seize 10 per cent, leaving large quantities for foreign markets. In 1992, 264 seizures, amounting to 1,431 kilograms of heroin, were made in Thailand or abroad. During the first six months of 1993, the Thai authorities seized 727 kilograms of heroin.

40. Heroin seizures doubled in India in 1992, amounting to 1,153 kilograms compared with 622 kilograms for 1991. Seizures, however, dropped significantly during the first seven months of 1993 to 293 kilograms.

41. The demand and supply of heroin was on the increase in Sri Lanka, where No. 3 heroin was in great demand by some 50,000 heroin abusers. The trend since 1990 was for opium, heroin and methaqualone to be trafficked from India to Sri Lanka. Many couriers travelled by air from Pakistan to Sri Lanka, which had become an important transit route to Europe.

42. A new development was the increasing seizures of No. 3 and No. 4 heroin in Nepal in 1992 and 1993 and the destruction of 42.5 hectares of poppy cultivation in that country in 1992.

Nepal continued to be targeted as a market for No. 3 heroin for domestic consumption and as a transit point for No. 4 heroin, principally from Bangkok, to Europe.

43. Prices and purity of heroin varied considerably. During 1992, retail prices in Australia ranged from 150 Australian dollars ($A) to $A 800 per gram, depending on purity. In New Zealand, prices at street level remained high, ranging from 1,000 New Zealand dollars ($NZ) to $NZ 1,200. In Sri/Lanka, the street value of a kilogram of heroin ranged from US$ 18,090 to US$/22,039. The average price of heroin in Hanoi was about US$ 10,000 per 700/grams. In the United States, during the first quarter of 1993, the price of a kilogram of South-East Asian heroin ranged from US$ 180,000 to US$/250,000, compared with US$ 70,000 to US$ 200,000 for a kilogram of South-West Asian heroin and US$ 50,000 to US$ 120,000 for Mexican heroin.

44. China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, were increasingly being used as transit points for illicit traffic in heroin from South-East Asia to Australia, Canada, United States and Europe, with smaller quantities destined for other South-East Asian countries. International illicit traffic in heroin from South-East Asia was dominated by traditional South-East Asian drug-trafficking groups and individuals. In targeting the United States, Australia and Western Europe as major markets, they used Hong Kong, as well as Singapore, as transit points and financial markets to launder their illicit gains. These organized crime groups dominated the import and distribution of heroin in Australia. It was indicated that major drug syndicates were organizing and financing their drug-trafficking operations from Hong Kong, while the consignments were increasingly being routed through other safer transit routes and ports to avoid interception. In recent years, increased use had been made of the overland route from Myanmar through the southern Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Guangxi to Guangdong and on to Hong Kong. This route accounted for an important share of the heroin found in the illicit market in Hong Kong. Large consignments of heroin were also trafficked by sea to Hong Kong and Malaysia by fishing trawlers, mainly from Thailand.

45. The representative of Thailand pointed to some new routes which had emerged in 1992 and 1993 and which should be closely monitored. These included the route from Thailand through the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam to Europe or from Viet Nam to Europe through the Russian Federation. Couriers from Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, often entering Thailand as tourist groups, would stop over in Bangkok on their onward

journey to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. While in Bangkok they would receive heroin from their local suppliers before continuing their travel to Nong Khai province by train or bus to cross the Mekong River at Tha Sadet checkpoint to Vientiane. In Vientiane there might be a change of courier for the onward journey by plane to Hanoi and a European destination. Heroin, amounting to 5 or 6 kilograms, would be concealed in false-bottom suitcases. Alternatively, couriers would use Ho Chi Minh City as a direct transit point from Bangkok to European countries by air.

Cannabis

46. Cannabis, in various forms, continued to be one of the most commonly abused drugs in the region. Seizures of cannabis during the first half of 1993 rose significantly following a marked decrease in 1992. A total of 175/seizures, accounting for 68.4 tonnes of cannabis, including 55.5 tonnes of cannabis resin, were reported to CCC in the first six months of 1993, compared with 230 seizures amounting to 68 tonnes in 1992.

47. Nepal remained a major source of cannabis smuggled into Hong Kong and India, and Nepalese couriers had become active in the region. There was a large increase in the number and quantity of seizures of cannabis in India during 1992, amounting to 64 tonnes of cannabis and 5,839 seizures. The Indian authorities seized 49.6 tonnes of cannabis during the first half of 1993. India emerged as a major transshipment point for cannabis resin from Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan.

48. Large-scale cannabis plantations were detected in Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea and Thailand. In Lao People's Democratic Republic large-scale cannabis production and trafficking often involved organizations from neighbouring countries which provided funds, bribed local officials, and supplied seeds, equipment and other inputs. While Hong Kong continued to be targeted by Nepalese couriers, a new trend in 1993 had been for Nigerian traffickers to smuggle herbal cannabis into Hong Kong from Nigeria via Europe by air couriers and mail.

49. Abuse of cannabis was reported to be on the rise in several countries, particularly in the Pacific island States such as the Cook Islands, Fiji and Tonga, as well as Papua New Guinea. The Pacific island States were often used as transit points in the traffic of illicit drugs to Australia and New Zealand.

50. Cannabis was a major drug of abuse in Japan, where 238 kilograms were seized in 1993. Some 366 members of organized crime syndicates, the Bouryokydan, were arrested for cannabis-related offences. Most of the cannabis herb seized in Japan originated from Philippines and Thailand. In the Republic of Korea, cannabis offenders, accounting for 1,157 persons, outnumbered methamphetamine offenders for the first time in 1992. Some 68/kilograms of herbal cannabis were seized by the authorities of the Republic of Korea in 1992, a 137 per cent increase over 1991. In New Zealand over 580/kilograms of cannabis leaf and about 307,000 plants were seized during the 1992/93 period. Quality cannabis leaf heads were priced at about $NZ 4,500 per pound.

51. In Australia, a total of 2,737 seizures were made by federal agencies during the period from 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993, accounting for 4,717/kilograms of cannabis and its derivatives, compared with 2,613 seizures accounting for 4,561 kilograms in the previous reporting period. Prices for cannabis leaf ranged from $A 9 to $A 30 per gram. Of particular note was the seizure of 2.2 tonnes of cannabis resin from Afghanistan off the West Australian coast in August 1992. In New Zealand 7.3 kilograms of cannabis resin were seized during 1992/93 in 120 separate seizures, particularly through the mail system. Following the seizure of 252 kilograms of cannabis oil at Auckland Airport in August 1993, a joint operation by New Zealand customs and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration uncovered an elaborate plan to import cannabis oil from Jamaica into the United States, using New Zealand as a transit country.

52. Seizures of cannabis resin in India increased significantly during the first half of 1993, with the number of seizures higher than those of 1992. Large seizures were made on the border with Nepal and Pakistan.

53. As of June 1993, the average tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content for commercial grade cannabis and sinsemilla in the United States was 3.31 and 7.88 per cent respectively, compared with less than 2 per cent during the late 1970s. The Meeting was informed of a hybrid cannabis species grown in Papua New Guinea with a THC content of 25 to 30 per cent. In 1992, the price for commercial grade cannabis ranged from US$ 300 and US$ 3,000 per pound (0.454/kilograms), compared with US$ 350 to US$ 600 per pound a decade earlier. Sinsemilla, with its higher THC content, ranged from US$ 650 to US$/9,600 per pound in 1992, compared with a price range of US$ 1,000 to US$/2,000 per pound a decade earlier.

54. Several representatives informed the Meeting of the measures taken by their Governments to address the problem of illicit cultivation and abuse of, and traffic in, cannabis. The Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Programme conducted in the United States in 1992 had resulted in the eradication of 7.49/million cultivated cannabis plants and 264 million low potency wild-growing plants and the confiscation of assets worth US$ 69.3 million. In Sri/Lanka eradication programmes carried out in the jungle areas of the south-
east region in 1992 led to the eradication of some 33 acres of illicit cannabis plantations. Annual air surveillance operations conducted by the New Zealand police using helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft spotters had been successful, forcing cultivators to plant on small plots often in remote areas.

Cocaine

55. Several countries and areas in the region, particularly Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Philippines and Republic of Korea, were being targeted as new cocaine markets. Significant increases in the seizure of cocaine were noted during 1992 and the first six months of 1993. Latin American nationals emerged as the major traffickers and air couriers. Illicit traffic in cocaine to the region was facilitated following the establishment of direct airlinks between the region and source countries.

56. Cocaine was readily available in all major cities in the United States. Prices for a kilogram of cocaine remained low and stable in the primary urban import and distribution centres. The national price for a kilogram of cocaine remained stable or decreased to a range of US$ 11,000 to US$ 40,000 during January through March 1993, compared with US$ 13,000 to US$ 40,000 during October through December 1992. The average purity of cocaine decreased at all distribution levels during the first quarter of 1993.

57. South American cartels continued to seek to exploit new routes to Western Europe, and the high level of seizures was expected to continue. The French authorities seized 1,625 kilograms in 1992.

58. In the United States, crack cocaine was readily available in virtually every major city and, to a lesser degree, in many small towns and rural areas. Crack manufacturing and distribution had reached a saturation point in the larger metropolitan areas. The national price for a vial of crack cocaine ranged from as low as US$ 2 to as high as US$ 75, but generally sold for US$/10 to

US$/50 depending upon the size. Gram prices ranged from US$/45 to US$/150. Prices per kilogram, ranging from US$ 17,000 to US$ 35,000, were comparable to those of cocaine hydrochloride. Illicit traffic and abuse of crack cocaine remained a major concern for authorities of France and the United Kingdom following significant increases in seizures in both countries during 1992 and the first half of 1993.

59. From 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1993, the Australian federal agencies made 87/seizures of cocaine totalling a record 310.8 kilograms, compared with 80/seizures totalling 27.3 kilograms in the previous reporting period, mainly as a result of seven major seizures. Most of the cocaine seized in Australia was purchased in South America or the United States. The retail price for cocaine remained stable in Australia in 1993, ranging from $A 150 to $A/700 per gram, with a purity of between 40 and 90 per cent. Some significant cocaine seizures had been made in New Zealand, including a 2.2 kilogram seizure of cocaine from Bogota, through an international controlled delivery involving German and New Zealand customs. The illicit consignment transited through Frankfurt Airport. Prices in New Zealand varied from $NZ 300 to $NZ/500 per gram. During 1992, a record 31.4 kilograms of cocaine were seized and 148/offenders arrested in Japan. South American cocaine cartels were attempting to develop close ties with the Bouryokudan as they continued to target Japan as a new market. Seizures made in 1992 and 1993 confirmed the growing illicit traffic in cocaine in Thailand, with Bangkok being used as a marketing and distribution centre.

Psychotropic substances

60. Several representatives reported on the increased abuse of and traffic in psychotropic substances in their countries. Particular mention was made
of increased illicit manufacture of and trafficking in amphetamines and methamphetamine.

61. Amphetamines, after cannabis, were the second most important drug of abuse in Australia, and were readily available throughout the country in 1993. Most of the amphetamines were manufactured in Australia. In 1993 some 116/seizures, accounting for 4.7 kilograms, were made by federal agencies, whereas during 1992 state law enforcement agencies made 1,673 seizures accounting for 90.5/kilograms. Prices during 1993 ranged from $A 80 to $A 600 per gram depending on location. Outlaw motor-cycle gangs continued to control the illicit manufacture and distribution of amphetamines as well as MDMA, which was becoming increasingly available throughout Australia, particularly at dance parties.

Amphetamine sulphate, imported mainly from Belgium and the Netherlands, was one of the most popular drugs of abuse in the United Kingdom.

62. Amphetamine remained a serious threat in Thailand due to its widespread abuse and illicit manufacture. Illicit traffic in amphetamine was more profitable than trafficking in other illicit drugs. This had stimulated illicit manufacture despite stringent measures taken by the Thai authorities. Thus, whereas three amphetamine laboratories had been dismantled in 1991 and one in 1992, four laboratories had been dismantled during the first half of 1993, resulting in the seizure of tableting machines, several kilograms of methamphetamine hydrochloride, 245.7 kilograms of cutting agent and 1.6/million tablets weighing 162 kilograms.

63. Methamphetamine represented a substantial trafficking and abuse problem in a number of regions in the United States, particularly in the west and south-west, where most of the illicit production occurred. The price of methamphetamine at the wholesale level had remained relatively stable over the past four years, with current prices ranging from US$ 11,000 to US$ 44,000 per kilogram, and US$ 50 to US$ 130 per gram. Illicit traffic and abuse in the crystallized form of amphetamine known as "ice" was limited to several Asian-American communities on the West Coast and in Hawaii. "Ice" was mostly manufactured in clandestine laboratories located in the Philippines and Taiwan Province of China.

64. Methamphetamine was the most popular drug of abuse in Japan. About 90/per cent of drug offences in Japan were related to trafficking and abuse of methamphetamine: 15,311 persons were arrested in 1992, compared with 1,638/persons arrested for cannabis-related offences. Seizures during 1992 amounted to 166.2 kilograms. Organized crime syndicates, the Bouryokudan, were deeply involved in the illicit traffic in methamphetamine, which was smuggled into the country mostly from Taiwan Province of China. Members of Bouryokudan accounted for 44 per cent of all arrests. Their modus operandi was becoming more sophisticated, making detection and arrests more difficult. Controlled delivery operations had been successfully used in 1992 and 1993 to counter illicit traffic in methamphetamine.

65. Methamphetamine was also the most popular drug of abuse in the Republic of Korea. As a result of stringent law enforcement measures, illicit manufacture of methamphetamine was curtailed and the supply rings were dismantled. During the first half of 1993, the authorities of the Republic of Korea had seized 26.6

kilograms of methamphetamine and apprehended 1,083/offenders, compared with 2.2 kilograms seized and 430 offenders apprehended during the same period in 1992.

66. While increased law enforcement activities in China contributed to a marked decline in the seizure of methamphetamine in the region in 1992, China remained one of the sources of methamphetamine seized in Hong Kong, Japan, Philippines and Republic of Korea. Taiwan Province of China remained the major supplier for the Japanese market in 1992 and 1993. The law enforcement authorities in China seized 655 kilograms of methamphetamine in 1992.

67. There was some increased availability of lysergic acid diethyamide/(LSD) in 1992 in Australia and New Zealand, supported by sustained imports, mostly through the mail system. A recent operation in New Zealand successfully dismantled a syndicate which was trafficking in large quantities of LSD in the mail system, principally from Australia, Belgium and the Netherlands. Total seizures amounted to 24,000 units, with prices ranging from $NZ/15 to $NZ/50/per unit.

68. The availability of LSD increased throughout the United States, with sources mainly located in northern California. LSD was relatively inexpensive, with an average dosage unit costing approximately US$ 5 and often as little as from US$ 1 to US$ 2. Public and private mail systems appeared to be the primary means used for the transport and distribution of retail and wholesale quantities of LSD. The United States was an important source of LSD to the United Kingdom, where it was increasing in popularity due to its relatively low price. Major seizures of LSD destined for the United Kingdom were effected by the French authorities in 1992.

69. The Indian authorities made their largest seizures of 3,200 kilograms of illicit methaqualone bound for the South African market in January 1993. Three illicit manufacturing facilities in the Bombay area were dismantled in 1992.

70. MDMA, or "ecstasy", was increasingly available throughout Australia. While much of the supply was currently imported, domestic manufacture was increasing. Prescription drugs, obtained by burglary or forging of prescriptions, were subject to abuse, particularly by young people in New Zealand. Morphine sulphate tablets, prescribed for terminally ill cancer patients, had become popular among intravenous drug abusers in New Zealand. Such tablets, manufactured in various sizes, cost from $NZ 1 to $NZ 1.5 per milligram. Codeine, in tablet form or in cough

mixtures, was a popular drug of abuse in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. Psychotropic substances listed in Schedule IV of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, mainly alprazolam, diazepam, flunitrazepam, lorazepam, clonazepam, nimetazepam and triazolam, illicitly imported from abroad, were major substances of abuse in Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia.

Precursors

71. Several speakers referred to measures adopted in their countries to effectively monitor precursors and essential chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Some 42 tonnes of precursors were seized in China during the first six months of 1993. In 1992, the Chinese authorities seized 58.8 tonnes of acetic anhydride and other essential chemicals. As of April 1993, the Indian authorities had placed acetic anhydride under a strict control regime; 16,000 litres of acetic anhydride were confiscated during the first half of 1993. The Malaysian authorities had, since 1983, implemented legislation to stringently control acetic anhydride and other acetylating substances. Each import had to be authorized. The manufacture and import of ephedrine hydrochloride, the precursor for methamphetamine, was banned in the Republic of Korea. In the United States clandestine laboratory seizures had declined by more than 58 per cent since 1989, mostly as a result of the ongoing enforcement of federal and State legislation for the control of precursors and essential chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs.

Modus operandi and countermeasures

72. Most representatives commented on the trafficking routes and the modus operandi adopted by drug traffickers, which kept changing as traffickers adjusted to drug law enforcement initiatives. Several speakers pointed to the vulnerability of their countries to illicit traffic by sea. Sea routes were the most important trafficking routes from Thailand to Malaysia. Fishing vessels and other small craft were being used to smuggle illicit drugs (amounting to 60 per cent of the total) to various illegal entry points along the west coast of the Malaysian peninsula. The observers for CCC and ICPO/Interpol indicated that there was strong evidence that drug syndicates were diversifying their modus operandi in favour of sea routes in order to move bulk consignments of heroin, particularly from South-East Asia. Another trend was for cannabis resin and opiates from South-West Asia to be trafficked through the

Baluchistan province of Pakistan, and by maritime shipments to the Persian Gulf States or through the Suez Canal to Europe. It was also noted that large quantities of illicit drugs were being smuggled in commercial consignments by air and sea or concealed in containerized legitimate cargo. Airline passengers of different nationalities, using body or luggage concealment, continued to be important couriers, particularly for heroin from South-East and South-West Asia.

73. The international mail system was one of the most popular means used by traffickers to smuggle illicit drugs, particularly cocaine and LSD, into Australia and New Zealand. There was an increasing use of courier services to smuggle small quantities of heroin to other countries. Malaysian customs services were carrying out more stringent checks on parcels handled by forwarding agents.

74. Drug-trafficking operations were becoming more professionally organized, difficult to penetrate and violent. The increasing involvement of drug-trafficking syndicates and organized criminal organizations in the illicit traffic of illicit drugs was highlighted.

75. Several representatives informed the Meeting of measures taken by their Governments to cope with illicit traffic and abuse in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Several also pointed to new comprehensive approaches adopted by their Governments to address illicit demand through measures dealing with the prevention of drug abuse, treatment, compulsory detoxification, rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug abusers. Some participants indicated that nationwide campaigns to raise public awareness to the dangers of illicit traffic and drug abuse had been initiated and extended to rural communities with a view to inhibiting illicit cultivation and abuse.

76. Several representatives reported that specialized drug law enforcement and other operational units had been created in their countries to investigate drug-trafficking offences, monitor operations, and adopt and implement countermeasures. They also referred to the establishment of central units responsible for the establishment of policies and measures against illicit traffic and drug abuse and the coordination of all agencies concerned.

77. Several representatives informed the Meeting of measures taken by their Governments to harmonize their national legislation with the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 in order to become parties to that Convention and ensure the effective implementation of its provisions. Some representatives stressed the importance for States of the region to adopt legislation to enable the investigation into money-laundering offences and the confiscation of assets derived from illicit drug traffic. In this regard, the Republic of Korea had recently adopted novel provisions to monitor financial flows and ensure the identification of all persons making financial transactions, thereby reducing the possibility of money-laundering. The Meeting was informed that the application of money-laundering legislation adopted in April 1992 in Thailand had enabled the freezing, with the possibility of confiscation, of assets worth US$ 3.8 million in 17 drug trafficking cases. In Hong Kong, the Joint Customs and Police Financial Investigation Group had confiscated over US$ 18.2 million in property and assets, as well as freezing a further US$ 24.8 million, of convicted traffickers following the enactment of legislation in 1989. In Singapore, legislation empowering authorities to confiscate assets of convicted drug traffickers, enacted in September 1992, was not being enforced because of the need to amend the Banking Act and other laws and regulations applicable to financial institutions.

78. Several representatives emphasized the paramount importance of regional cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking, and referred to the bilateral and regional agreements or other forms of cooperation and reported on the positive results achieved. The Meeting was informed that a regional convention, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted in 1990, had streamlined working arrangements between the drug law enforcement authorities of the SAARC member countries. A drug-monitoring office had been established in Sri Lanka to collect, collate and disseminate information on drug trafficking in the SAARC countries.

79. Several representatives referred to the initiatives of their Governments, with the support of UNDCP, to implement the master-plan concept by assessing the drug situation and preparing proposals for a comprehensive drug control programme encompassing the different aspects of drug abuse control.

80. Several speakers expressed the strong support of their Governments for initiatives and arrangements to ensure closer regional and subregional cooperation, particularly between the countries bordering the Golden Triangle. Reference was made to the subregional strategy to enhance cross-border cooperation between China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand with the financial and technical support of UNDCP. To further subregional cooperation, the First Ministerial Meeting on Drug Control, held by Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand at Bangkok in 1992, adopted an agreement to exchange information and to assist each other in training.